

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. Digital Network WSJ.com MarketWatch BARRON'S All Things Digital. FINS SmartMoney More ▾ News, Quotes, Companies, Videos **SEARCH**

Monday, January 17, 2011 As of 1:14 PM EST New York 27° | 24°

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MIDDLE EAST GET 2 WEEKS FREE SUBSCRIBE NOW! **▶ THE PRINT JOURNAL** **▶ THE ONLINE JOURNAL**

Welcome, **Timothy D. Naegele** Logout
My Account ▾ My Journal ▾ Help

U.S. Edition Home ▾ Today's Paper ▾ Video ▾ Blogs ▾ Journal Community **Log In** ▾

World ▾ **U.S.** ▾ **New York** ▾ **Business** ▾ **Markets** ▾ **Tech** ▾ **Personal Finance** ▾ **Life & Culture** ▾ **Opinion** ▾ **Careers** ▾ **Real Estate** ▾ **Small Business** ▾

Asia ▾ China ▾ Hong Kong ▾ Japan ▾ India ▾ Europe ▾ U.K. ▾ Russia ▾ **Middle East** ▾ Africa ▾ Canada ▾ Latin America ▾ World Markets

TOP STORIES IN World **Brazil Flood Toll Reaches 640** 6 of 12 **Le Pen's Daughter Takes Party Helm** 7 of 12 **Google Contests Spain's Privacy Laws** 8 of 12

MIDDLE EAST NEWS | JANUARY 17, 2011, 1:14 P.M. ET

Barak Quits Israel's Labor Party

Article

Comments (9)

MORE IN MIDDLE EAST >

Email Print Save This Like 6 + More Text -

By CHARLES LEVINSON

JERUSALEM—Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak announced Monday that he was leaving the center-left Labor Party, casting clouds over the stability of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government and the prospects of restarting the peace process.

Mr. Barak said Monday he is forming a new, more centrist Independence Party, which will include four breakaway Labor Party lawmakers in addition to himself. Mr. Barak's new party will remain in Mr. Netanyahu's coalition.

The announcement marks a key moment in the remaking—or further unraveling—of Labor, the party of Israel's founding father, David Ben-Gurion, and of the slain prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, which was most affiliated with advocating peace with Israel's enemies. Labor's influence has waned in the past decade following Mr. Barak's failed bid as Prime Minister to negotiate peace with the Palestinians in 2000 and the ensuing outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising.

Labor won an all-time low 13 out of 120 seats in 2009 parliamentary elections, and its lawmakers were the only left-leaning member of Mr. Netanyahu's governing coalition, a group otherwise made up of nationalist and religious parties.

The shakeup to Labor wasn't unexpected. For months, Labor lawmakers had grown impatient with the lack of progress on the peace process and blamed Mr. Barak for not doing enough to pressure Mr. Netanyahu to make concessions to the Palestinians.

But Mr. Barak—a former special-forces commander with a reputation for being a farsighted strategist who brings military-like precision to his politics—appeared to have outflanked the Labor Party just as it was preparing to force Mr. Barak out of the government.



Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said he was sick of the infighting within the Labor Party. Reuters

In response to Mr. Barak's move, three Labor lawmakers, all ministers, announced Monday they were withdrawing from Mr. Netanyahu's government. The remaining five Labor lawmakers in the government are expected to follow suit but haven't yet made an official announcement.

The likely loss of those eight Labor lawmakers would leave Mr. Netanyahu with a smaller but more ideologically cohesive coalition of 66 seats in Israel's 120-seat legislature.

Mr. Netanyahu said his "government has grown much stronger" after the departure of lawmakers who had long been threatening to force the entire Labor party out of the government. That would have been far more destabilizing for Mr. Netanyahu: Mr. Barak's

WSJ. Magazine

- Like a Marriage, Only More Enduring
Twenty years ago, Warren Buffett invited Sharon...
- Michael Eisner
The former Disney CEO has reinvented himself...
- Resort on the Rise
Against a backdrop of Sol LeWitt's stunning...
- A Very Smart Car
Yes, it's adorable. But unlike other tiny cars...

READ MORE >

Get an iPad™ for the holidays?
Start the New Year off in the know. Download The Wall Street Journal app. **DOWNLOAD NOW!**

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. *live in the know*

Email Newsletters and Alerts

The latest news and analysis delivered to your in-box. Check the boxes below to sign up.

This Week's Most Popular On the Editorial Page

SIGN UP

[Manage Email Preferences](#)

Video >

Family Defends Pakistani Assassin 1:49

A Fragile Peace in Afghanistan 2:10

Protests in Jordan 1:39

Most Popular >

presence and authority as military leader representing the center left appears to be a top political priority for Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Netanyahu said the public dissent from within his coalition by the departing Labor lawmakers had given the Palestinians false hope that if they avoided peace negotiations, Mr. Netanyahu's government might fall.

"The whole world knows, and the Palestinians know, that this government will be around for the next few years and that it is with this government that they should negotiate for peace," Mr. Netanyahu said after Mr. Barak's announcement.

In his announcement Monday morning, Mr. Barak cited "endless fighting within the party" especially from a large faction of lawmakers that was uncomfortable with his ongoing alliance with Mr. Netanyahu and other rightist parties.

In recent months, the infighting and paralysis within the Labor Party had become so bad, one party official said, that Mr. Barak was even blocked from approving cosmetic changes to the party's Web site.

Some analysts and party officials said Mr. Barak's move and the departure of the Labor party signaled that parties had already begun positioning themselves for new elections in Israel, which in itself would have a destabilizing impact on Mr. Netanyahu's government.

Tzipi Livni, leader of the opposition centrist Kadima Party, seized on Mr. Barak's move to stake her claim as the sole remaining opposition leader in Israel. She had competed with Mr. Barak for votes from the center-left in 2009, but by abandoning Labor, Mr. Barak had cast his lot firmly with Mr. Netanyahu, she said.

"The Netanyahu government is a narrow government crumbling from the inside," she said.

Write to Charles Levinson at charles.levinson@wsj.com

MORE IN MIDDLE EAST »

Email Printer Friendly Order Reprints

Share: [Facebook] [Twitter] [LinkedIn] [Google+] [Dribbble] [StumbleUpon] [Delicious] [Reddit] [Diigo] [Print]

Like 6 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

SPONSORED LINKS

BlackBerry® Smartphones Find More, Know More, Do More. BlackBerry Pulls It All Together. BlackBerry.com

Refinance Rates at 3.25% \$150,000 at \$609/month. Get 4 Free Quotes. No SSN Rqd. Save Here! RefinanceRates.SmartQuote.com

Affordable Refinance Rate \$200K mortgage for \$857/mo? No SSN needed. Request secure & free quote Refinance.GuideToLenders.com

Add a Comment

JOURNAL COMMUNITY

We welcome your thoughtful comments. Please comply with our Community rules. All comments will display your real name.

Text input field for adding a comment.

Track replies to my comment

Go to Comments tab

CLEAR POST

Share articles and post your comments on Facebook | What's this?

Login with Facebook

Related Stories

Moment of Hope, Unity for Tunisia Yesterday 02:16 P.M.

Hezbollah Defends Bringing Down Lebanon Government 14 hrs ago

Lebanon Crisis Restores Sway for Syria 1/15/2011

Related Videos

1/17/2011 Thousands of Protesters Take to the Streets of Tunisia

23 hrs ago Regional stability

Navigation tabs: Read, Emailed, Video, Commented, Searches. List of 5 most read articles: 1. Hu Stresses U.S. Ties, Questions Dollar, 2. Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior, 3. Apple CEO Jobs to Take Medical Leave, 4. Why Apple's Best Days May Be Over, 5. Opinion: Lenore Skenazy: Eek! A Male!

Latest Tweets

Follow [Twitter icon]

"Goldman Limits Facebook Deal http://on.wsj.com/eSYfkO" Moments ago from WSJEuropeBiz (WSJ Europe Business)

"Glaxo Hit by \$3.5 Billion Charge http://on.wsj.com/eJnNe" Moments ago from WSJEuropeBiz (WSJ Europe Business)

"Tesco Protests Over Asda "Price Guarantee" http://on.wsj.com/g50FKq" 1 hrs ago from WSJUK (WSJ U.K.)

"Glaxo Hit by \$3.5 Billion Charge http://on.wsj.com/dUIPuj" 1 hrs ago from WSJUK (WSJ U.K.)

"Richemont's Asian Sales Soar http://on.wsj.com/fn0Pbk" 2 hrs 6 min ago from WSJAsiaBiz (WSJ Asia Business)

Latest Headlines

Giffords Upgraded to Serious Condition

Hu Stresses U.S. Ties, Questions Dollar

Sargent Shriver Hospitalized in D.C.

New Call Not to Raise Debt Cap

Boehner Addresses Debt-Limit Debate

Time Warner-Sinclair Deal Avoids TV Blackout

Priebus Ousts Steele as RNC Chairman

Zsa Zsa Gabor Recovering After Leg Amputated

U.S. Banks Loosen Purse Strings

Unions Mobilize Against Curbs

More Headlines

Lebanon's Government Falls 1/13/2011

Israelis Push Back Iran Bomb Timeline 1/7/2011

Netanyahu Backs U.S. Proposal on Building Restrictions 11/14/2010

Israel Begins Housing Project 1/10/2011

Israeli Leader Asks U.S. to Free Spy Jonathan Pollard 1/4/2011



questioned in wake of Tunisia riots



Yesterday 03:53 P.M.
Fouad Mebazza takes over as Tunisia's interim president

CLICK HERE for Full Article Access - and get

TWO WEEKS FREE

UPGRADE NOW

WSJ.com subscribers enjoy:

- Deeper core business, industry and market news
- Exclusive newsletters and alerts
- Save & share article functionality within the Journal Community

Editors' Picks



No Restaurant of Your Own? Borrow One



Why Apple's Best Days May Be Over



At LV, This Year's Man Is Chinese



Grand Slam Title Remains Elusive for Wozniacki



Why Andrew Lloyd Webber Chose Hong Kong

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

[BACK TO TOP](#) ▲

WSJ.com Account:

- My Account
- Subscriber Billing Info

Create an Account:

- Register for Free
- Subscribe to WSJ.com
- Sign up for WSJ Professional

Help & Information Center:

- Help
- Customer Service
- Contact Us
- New on WSJ.com
- Tour the new Journal

About:

- News Licensing
- Advertising
- Advertise Locally
- Conferences
- About Dow Jones
- Privacy Policy - Updated
- Subscriber Agreement & Terms of Use - Updated
- Copyright Policy
- Jobs at WSJ.com

WSJ.com:

- Site Map
- Home
- World
- U.S.
- New York
- Business
- Markets
- Market Data
- Tech
- Personal Finance
- Life & Culture
- Opinion
- Autos
- Careers
- Real Estate
- Small Business
- Student Journal
- Corrections

Tools & Formats:

- Today's Paper
- Video Center
- Graphics
- Columns
- Blogs
- Topics
- Guides
- Alerts
- Newsletters
- Mobile
- Tablet Edition
- Podcasts
- RSS Feeds
- Journal Community
- WSJ on Twitter
- WSJ on Facebook
- WSJ on Foursquare
- My Journal
- Portfolio

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Digital Network

- WSJ.com
 - Marketwatch.com
 - Barrons.com
 - SmartMoney.com
 - AllThingsD.com
 - FINS: Finance, IT jobs, Sales jobs
 - BigCharts.com
 - Virtual Stock Exchange
 - WSJ Radio
 - ProfessorJournal.com
 - WSJ U.S. Edition
 - WSJ Asia Edition
 - WSJ Europe Edition
 - WSJ India Page
- Foreign Language Editions:
- WSJ Chinese
 - WSJ Japanese
 - WSJ Portuguese
 - WSJ Spanish



Copyright ©2011 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

